

Amendments To The Specification:

Please add the following new paragraph after paragraph [0020]:

[0020.1] FIGURE 8 is an enlarged view of the exemplary attachment of the surface support structure shown in FIGURE 7, illustrating the surface support structure being moved outwardly in anticipation of an impact event so as to enhance impact absorption and vehicle safety.

Please replace paragraph [0036] with the following amended paragraph:

[0036] Additionally, the guard rails 18a, 18b or structural surfaces can be reactive to sensed impact. For example, they may alter the rigidity of their mounting (connection to the body 14 of the vehicle 12) such as by allowing a decreased, but energy absorbing, resistance to movement. One such mechanism for altering the rigidity is through the inclusion of a shock absorber 90, as shown in Figure 7, which allows the structural surfaces to move inwardly in the event of a vehicle impact. Alternatively, a rheomagnetic fluid can also be utilized to effect situation-specified resistance. In this instance, the fluid would be transformed from a solid structure to a fluid structure within a device to allow movement or flexibility upon demand. Additionally, similar to the front guard 34 and as shown in Figure 8, the shock absorber 90 can be adjusted for moving the rear structural surface 28a ~~they can move~~ outwardly in anticipation of the event of impact to provide further impact absorption and thereby increase safety of vehicle occupants. It is contemplated that the shock absorber 90 can be adjusted for moving various other suitable structural surfaces as desired. Moreover, the structural mounting can be accomplished by hydraulic, pneumatic or a variety of other suitable connections that allow for force absorption.